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A label comprising a transponder and a system comprising a transponder

The present invention relates to a label to be attached to a surface, the label comprising a transponder. The invention also relates to a web comprising a

5 backing web and labels, each label comprising a transponder, and to a system comprising a surface and a label comprising a transponder.

Transponders are used in secure supply chains in order to control the supply chain. The functioning of the transponders is often disturbed because

10 packaging materials or contents of packages cause detuning or attenuation and as a consequence, the transponder does not work properly. Furthermore, different retail products have different dielectric characteristics and therefore different effect on electrical components, such as transponders. For example, on metal surfaces or on some other surfaces
15 which have high RF losses, the transponders do not work at all.

In some cases the problem can be solved by manufacturing a suitable transponder for each application, but it is naturally an expensive way to solve the problem. It is also possible to make the label comprising the transponder

20 thicker but then it is impossible to print the label by TTR (thermal transfer ribbon) printers or barcode printers, which are conventionally used by package manufacturers, such as CPG (consumer package goods) manufacturers. Different returnable transport items are often collected in the same place, and it is cumbersome if all types of the items require a tailored
25 transponder.

Besides the solutions in which thickness is increased, certain hard materials or encapsulations have been used. Such labels can be neither printed nor attached automatically. Further, they are expensive.

30 Also a bent label has been introduced. It is intended to be attached to a target surface (in this application the target surface means any surface to which a label is attached) in such a manner that it is attached to the surface from its both ends and the middle of the label is loose from the surface. A
35 problem with the bent label is that it is difficult to attach to the target surface,

and a bent antenna does not work as well as a straight antenna. Further, the loose part of the label is easily torn.

Publication US 2003/0080917 discloses a dielectric shielding for improved

5 RF performance of RFID. The shielding is formed from a release liner which remains between the transponder and the target surface, or the shielding is formed from a portion of a face sheet which is folded upon itself.

10 The label of the invention is characterized in that the label comprises a non-adherent flap which contains the transponder. The web of the invention is characterized in that each label comprises a non-adherent flap which contains the transponder. The system of the invention is characterized in that the surface is provided with a spacer.

15 The labels of the invention can be handled as normal labels, for example they can be printed normally and they can be attached to the target surface automatically.

20 When the label of the invention is attached to the target surface, the flap containing the transponder remains loose, and thus the distance between the target surface and the transponder increases. The increase in the distance may be for example as small as 1 mm but it enhances the functioning of the transponder outstandingly, and the transponder is insensitive to the material onto which the label is attached. Before attaching the label to the target

25 surface, the label can be printed normally because the flap is thin enough to pass the normal printing processes. Further, the labels comprising the flap can be manufactured in such a manner that only minor changes or no changes at all are required in the manufacturing lines. Thus, the manufacturing process of the label of the invention is cost-effective.

30 Still another advantage is that the label can be such that the transponder can be removed from the label at a desired stage. For example, when the label of the invention is attached to a consumer package, such as a drug package, the transponder can be removed when the package is sold to a consumer.

35 Thus the threat that anybody can trace the package is eliminated.

The aim of the invention is to create a label which comprises means for increasing the distance between the target surface and the transponder. The target surface can be any surface to which the label is attached. The target surface can be a surface of a corrugated case, or a surface of a returnable transport item (RTI), such as a pallet, a roll container, or a crate. The typical use of the invention is with packages which are piled on pallets. The pile of packages is usually wrapped with a shrink-wrap film. The label of the invention can be attached to the pallet, the shrink-wrap film, or to each package in the pile. When the packages or their contents comprise metallic parts, or the packages include liquids, it is expectable that problems with conventional labels occur, and thus the label of the invention is a solution which can be used under such difficult conditions.

The transponder comprises an electrically operating RFID (radio frequency identification) or RF-EAS (electronic article surveillance) circuit on a surface of a substrate. The substrate is usually of a plastic material, such as polyester. The electrically operating RFID circuit of the transponder is an electric oscillating circuit (RCL circuit) operating at a determined frequency. The circuit comprises an antenna and an integrated circuit on a chip. The antenna can be a coil, an antenna based on the dipole antenna technique, or any other planar antenna technique. In the label of the invention, the antenna is often based on the dipole antenna technique, and the transponder preferably operates at ultra-high frequencies (UHF). The antenna is preferably of aluminium, copper, silver, or a conductive polymeric material, and it is formed on the substrate for example by etching, printing, electrolysis, plating, or by some other additive techniques. The chip is electrically or capacitively connected to the antenna, and it can be attached to the antenna either directly, or via a module which comprises the chip and required electrical contacts.

The label of the invention can be a logistic label which comprising a face side, which can be used as a printing substrate for normal printed information, barcodes, or ePC (electronic product code). It is, however, possible that the face side does not contain any printed information. The size of the label can be for example 3x3, 4x6, or 6x6 inches, and the label is preferably of paper. Besides paper, any suitable material can be used. The

label has a loose flap at its any edge, or the flap forms a ridge, which protrudes from the plane of the label. It is insignificant whether the flap is in the cross-direction of the label, or perpendicular to the cross-direction. A transponder is placed on the reverse side of the label by using the adhesive which is on the surface of the label. To ensure that the transponder and the target surface have a certain minimum distance between them, folds can be used. Depending on the embodiment, the fold can be provided with perforations, cuts or scores to further enhance the functioning of the fold. The above-mentioned aids can also be used for removing the transponder. The flap can be formed in the label in a suitable process step, for example in the initial manufacturing process of the label, in the printing step, or in the application step of the label. The application step refers to the step in which the label is attached to the target surface. It is possible that the labels are arranged on a surface of a backing web, which can be of release paper, in such a manner that a continuous web comprising labels is formed.

It is also possible that the label of the invention has the transponder attached to its front side. To form the flap, a part of the reverse side of the label must be free of adhesive, or there must be a backing sheet against adhesive.

Another embodiment included in the invention, is a spacer which is attached to packaging material. The spacer can be a ring onto which the label is attached. The ring can be made of cardboard, and it can be provided with adhesive. An array of rings can be arranged on the surface of a continuous web from which they are picked automatically and attached to the target surface. The continuous web can be for example release paper.

In the following, the invention is described by using figures in which
30 Figs. 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b and 3 show labels of the invention.

Fig. 1a and 1b are perspective views of one label according to the invention. A label 1 has a face side 2 which can be used as a printing substrate, and a reverse side (not shown) which is provided with adhesive. The adhesive is preferably a pressure sensitive adhesive but also other adhesives are possible.

A transponder 6 comprising a substrate and an antenna and a chip on the surface of the substrate is dispensed to a close proximity of a line 3. The label 1 is folded along the line 3 in such a manner that the reverse sides of

5 the label on both sides of the line 3 adhere to each other, and thus a flap 7 comprising the area between the lines 4 and 5 is formed. According to Fig.1, the label 1 has two areas 8 and 9 which can serve as printing substrates, and which have adhesive on their reverse side.

10 Figs. 2a and 2b show other labels according to the invention. In Fig. 2a (which actually comprises two figures, namely the upper which is a perspective view of the label of the invention, and the lower which is a cross-sectional view of the label of the invention), a transponder 6 is attached to the reverse side of a label 1. That side of the transponder 6, which is not in contact with the reverse side of the label 1, is provided with adhesive. A backing sheet 10 is attached to the reverse side of the label 1 so that it covers the reverse side of the printing area 8 and the transponder 6. The backing sheet is scored along a line 11. When the label 1 is attached to the target surface the backing sheet 10 is removed from the area 8 but it is retained on the back surface of the transponder 6.

15 In Fig. 2b, which is a cross-sectional view, a transponder 6 which is not provided with adhesive on its reverse side is attached to the reverse side of a label 1. The transponder 6 attached to the label 1 forms a flap 7 and forces

20 the flap 7 to form an angle with the target surface 12.

25 Fig. 3 shows a front view of one embodiment of the invention. A label 1 comprising a transponder 6 is attached to a spacer 13, which is attached to the target surface (not shown). It is possible to provide between the label 1 and the spacer 13 some material, for example a shrink-wrap film. The spacer 13 is preferably made of cardboard, and it can be attached to the target surface beforehand.

30 The above-mentioned embodiments do not restrict the scope of the invention. The flap label can be formed in the label at any stage, and the flap

35

may include other materials and other parts in addition to those described above.

Claims:

1. A label to be attached to a surface, the label comprising a transponder, **characterized** in that the label comprises a non-adherent flap which contains
5 the transponder.
2. The label according to claim 1, **characterized** in that the label comprises a printing substrate.
- 10 3. The label according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that the flap is formed by attaching the transponder to the reverse side of the label.
4. The label according to any preceding claim, **characterized** in that the transponder has a scored backing sheet on its back surface.
- 15 5. The label according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that the flap is formed by folding a part of the label in such a manner that the reverse side of the label adheres to itself and forms a ridge.
- 20 6. The label according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that the flap is formed by attaching the transponder to the front side of the label, the area in the reverse side of the label underneath the transponder being non-adherent.
- 25 7. A web comprising a backing web and labels, each label comprising a transponder, **characterized** in that each label comprises a non-adherent flap which contains the transponder.
8. A system comprising a surface and a label comprising a transponder, **characterized** in that the surface is provided with a spacer.
- 30 9. The system according to claim 8, **characterized** in that the spacer is a ring of cardboard.

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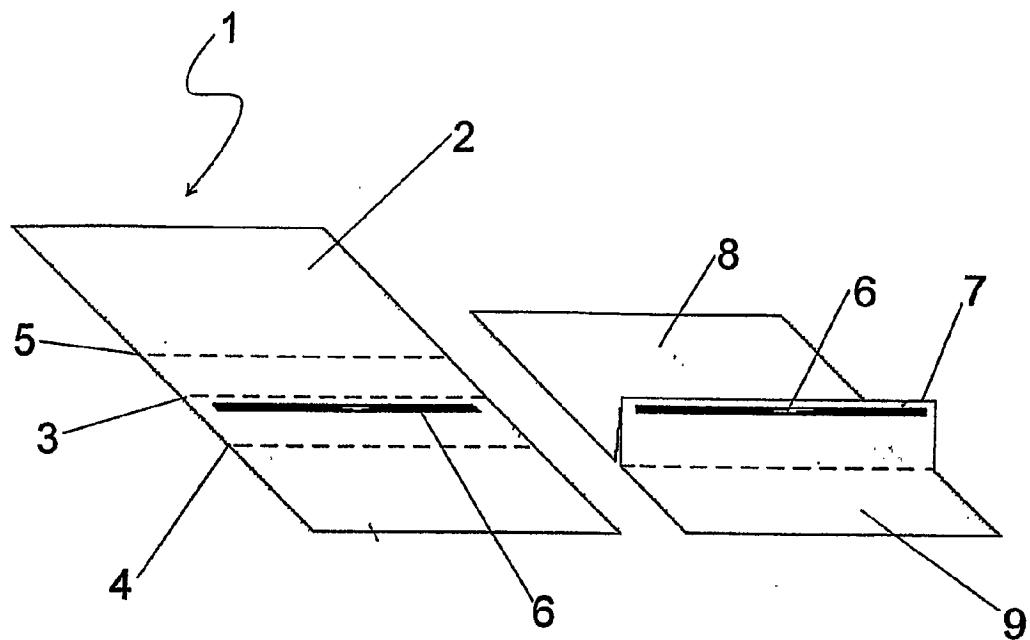


Fig. 1a.

Fig. 1b.

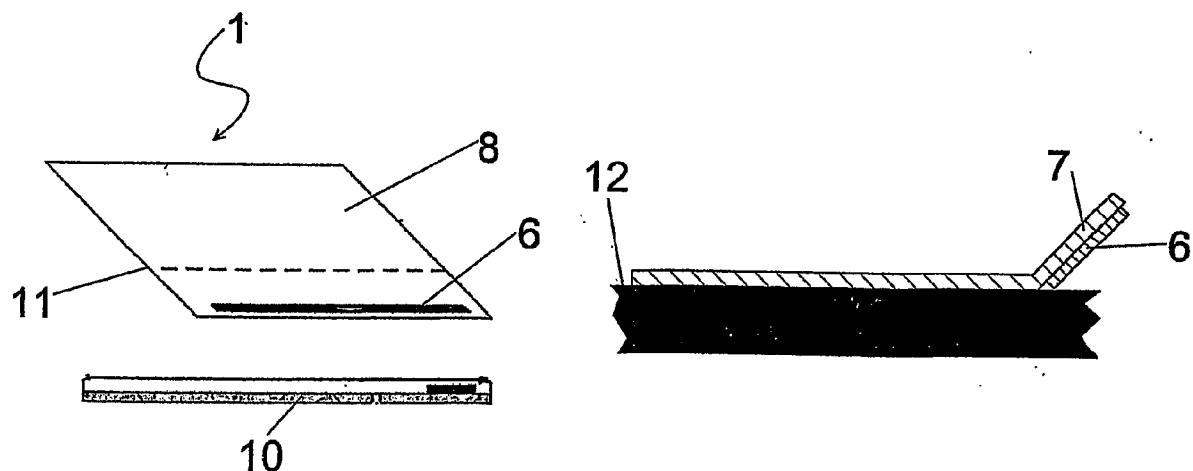


Fig. 2a.

Fig. 2b.

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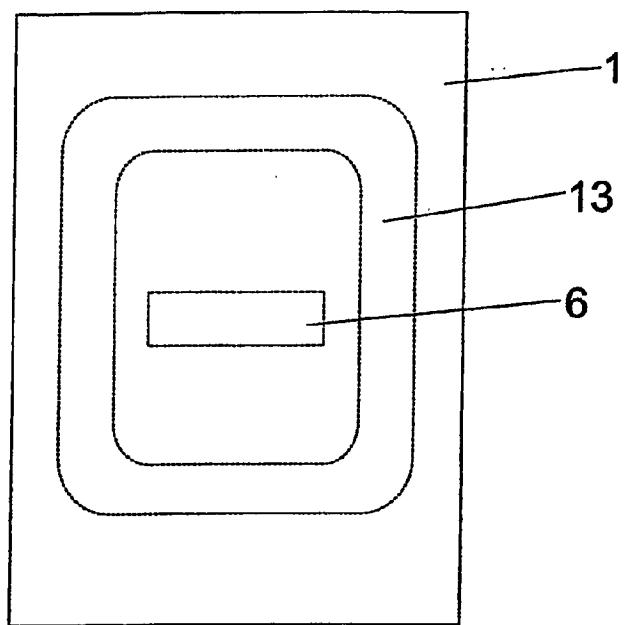


Fig. 3.